

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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USMISSION USUN NY

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 9075

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TAGS: EAID, ECON, PDIP, JA, UR, VM

SUBJECT: DIPLOMAT COMMENTS ON VIETNAMESE FOREIGN REALTIONS

REF: HONG KONG 8933

SUMMARY: A SENIOR DIPLOMAT ASSIGNED TO HANOI MET WITH CONGENOFF TO REVIEW THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE IN THE SRV. THE MAIN POINTS OF HIS COMMENTS COVERED AN APPARENT INCREASE IN SRV PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SOVIET VIEWS, A WEAKENING OF JAPANESE RESOLVE TO RESIST SRV DEMANDS FOR CREDITS, THE POSSIBLE APPEARANCE OF FONMIN TRINH AT THE NEXT UNGA AND A CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM ON THE SOUTH. END SUMMARY.

1. SRV-USSR RELATIONS: IN THE PAST FOUR TO SIX MONTHS THE VIETNAMESE APPEAR TO BE TAKING A MORE PRO-SOVIET STANCE IN FOREIGN POLICY. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY NOTICEABLE IN VIETNAMESE COMMENTARY ON AFRICA IN SUPPORT OF
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SOVIET POSITIONS THERE. AT THE SAME TIME THE SOVIETS ARE REPORTED TO BE PURCHASING FOOD GRAINS FOR THE VIETNAMESE, IN PARTICULAR AUSTRALIAN WHEAT. (TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND TONS OF AUSTRALIAN WHEAT AND 50 TONS OF AUSTRALIAN FLOUR WERE SHIPPED TO VIETNAM THIS YEAR, OF WHICH AN UNSPECIFIED AMOUNT WAS PAID FOR BY THE USSR.) IN CONTRAST, NO COMMODITIES APPEAR TO

BE ARRIVING FROM THE PRC AND IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THE CHINESE ARE NOW MAINLY CONCENTRATING ON PROJECT AID. POLITBURO MEMBER LE DUC THO HAS ALSO BEEN VISITING EASTERN EUROPE SINCE EARLY MAY, POSSIBLY IN CONNECTION WITH VEITNAM'S STRONGER SUPPORT OF SOVIET POLICIES.

2. SRV-JAPANESE RELATIONS: UNTIL RECENTLY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN RESISTING SRV REQUESTS TO PROVIDE CREDITS BECAUSE OF VIETNAM'S REFUSAL TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEBTS INCURRED BY THE GVN FOR JAPANESE FINANCED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE SOUTH. HOWEVER, JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN, FEARING THE POSSIBLE LOSS OF INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN VIETNAM HAVE JOINED THE SRV IN PRESSURING THE GOJ ON THIS ISSUE, AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT TOKYO WILL GIVE. THE JAPANESE EMBASSY IS REPORTEDLY STILL SMARTING OVER AN SRV DECISION TO ALLOW SOVIET AND CHINESE CONSULS IN SAIGON BUT NO JAPANESE POST.

3. SRV ENTRY INTO THE UN: REPORTS IN HANOI INITIALLY INDICATED THAT PHAM VAN DONG WOULD ATTEND THE NEXT MEETING OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SRV'S FORMAL ENTRY INTO THE UN. DONG APPEARS EXHAUSTED FROM HIS LAST ROUND OF TRIPS, HOWEVER, AND VIETNAM'S FONGMIN NGUYEN DUY TRINH IS NOW EXPECTED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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LEAD THE SRV DELEGATION.

4. CENTRAL PARTY PLENUM: A PLENARY MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE IS REPORTED TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN JULY TO CONSIDER PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTH. THE SRV APPEARS DETERMINED TO PRESS HARD ON TWO MAJOR ASPECTS OF THEIR POLICY - THE RESETTLEMENT OF A LARGE PORTION OF THE SOUTHERN URBAN POPULATION INTO NEW ECONOMIC AREAS (NEA'S) AND THE COLLECTIVIZATION OF SOUTHERN AGRICULTURE. BOTH POINTS WERE STRESSED IN ALTERNATE POLITBURO MEMBER VO VAN KIET'S REPORT TO THE HCM CITY (SAIGON) PEOPLE'S COUNCIL ON JUNE 25. KIET SET THE POPULATION GOAL FOR SAIGON IN 1979 AT 2.5 MILLION, AND WITH PERSONS REPORTEDLY RETURNING FROM THE NEA'S AS FAST AS THEY ARE BEING SENT OUT, THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO UNDERTAKE DRACONIAN MEASURES TO ACHIEVE ITS GOAL.

5. COMMENT: THE ABOVE COMMENTS OF INCREASED SRV PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE SOVIET LINE CONTRAST WITH THOSE OF THE OBSERVER IN REFTEL WHO INDICATED MOUNTING FRICTION BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE AND SOVIETS.

IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT AS THE FOOD SHORTAGE BECAME
MORE ACUTE IN VIETNAM, THE VIETNAMESE WERE FORCED
INTO THE POSITION OF ACCEPTING INCREASING SOVIET
DEMANDS IN EXCHANGE FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.
WHILE THIS TACTIC WOULD GAIN GREATER VIETNAMESE
LIP SERVICE TO THE SOVIET SIDE, IT WOULD CERTAINLY
DEVELOP INCREASED PERSONAL FRICTION AND IN THE END
A GREATER DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE
TO BE INDEPENDENT.
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